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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAN - NUCLEAR ESCALATION  
BOLTON NOMINATION OIL FOR FOOD REPORT IRAQ - BUSH AND BLAIR  
PARIS - FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

IRAN - NUCLEAR ESCALATION  
BOLTON NOMINATION  
OIL FOR FOOD REPORT  
IRAQ - BUSH AND BLAIR

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

WHILE EU ISSUES CONTINUE TO DOMINATE PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES, IRAN'S LATEST NUCLEAR THREAT, THE BOLTON NOMINATION HEARINGS AND THE REPORT ON OIL FOR FOOD ARE TODAY'S THREE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL STORIES. CATHOLIC LA CROIX HEADLINES "IRAN SPEEDS UP ITS NUCLEAR RACE" WHILE EDITORIALIST FRANCOIS ERNENWEIN CALLS IRAN'S POSITION "A THREAT FOR THE WEST" WHICH SHOULD LEAD "THE EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS TO WORK CLOSER TOGETHER." IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO ISABELLE LASSERRE QUESTIONS TEHERAN'S MOTIVATIONS AND ASKS: "ARE THE THREATS ON THE LEVEL OR IS TEHERAN BLUFFING?" (SEE PART C)

IN LA CROIX BRUNO TERTRAIS OF THE FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH LINKS THE TWO THREATS, FROM IRAN AND NORTH KOREA AND COMMENTS: "THE THREATS COMING FROM THESE TWO COUNTRIES ARE DIFFERENT, BUT IT IS NO MERE COINCIDENCE IF THEY ARE BOTH SPEAKING UP AT THE SAME TIME. WITH THE IRANIAN AND NORTH KOREAN EXAMPLES, WE DO RUN THE RISK OF A NEW WAVE OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION BY WAY OF A DOMINO EFFECT."

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION DEVOTES ITS LEAD STORY TO THE OIL FOR FOOD REPORT AND ITS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST CHARLES PASQUA. IN HIS EDITORIAL PATRICK SABATIER SUGGESTS THAT ALTHOUGH PASQUA IS NOT COMPLETELY INNOCENT, "THE AMERICAN SENATORS' TRUE TARGETS ARE THE UN AND FRANCE." (SEE PART C)

THE BOLTON NOMINATION ELICITS EXTENSIVE COVERAGE. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE, CORINE LESNES TITLES HER ARTICLE: "JOHN BOLTON, THE VOICE OF AMERICAN UNILATERALISM WANTS TO IMPOSE HIS IDEAS ON THE UN." BUT HER REPORT QUOTES FRENCH DIPLOMATS AS SAYING HE IS A "DIFFICULT NEGOTIATOR BUT A REAL PROFESSIONAL." FORMER DCM TO PARIS AVIS BOHLEN CALLS HIM A "BULLY" AND RECOUNTS HIS EFFORTS TO SINK THE TREATY ON VERIFICATION OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. LES ECHOS'S UNFLATTERING PROFILE CALLS BOLTON A "MUSTACHIO-ED TROUBLEMAKER" AND LISTS HIS OTHER NICKNAMES SUCH AS "THE GUIDED MISSILE," "ANTI-DIPLOMAT," AND "TREATY-KILLER" PUTTING HIM AT ODDS WITH THE PERSONALITY NEEDED FOR A UN FUNCTION. FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO CHARM THE UN, ONE COULD NOT IMAGINE BETTER NEGATIVE PUBLICITY FOR THE US POSITION. FOR LE FIGARO THE DELAY IS A "SLIGHT TO PRESIDENT BUSH, THE FIRST OF THIS SECOND TERM." (SEE PART C)

IN HIS WEEKLY WRAP-UP NOTES IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO IVAN RIOUFOL CHASTISES THE FALSE PROPHETS WHO PREDICTED THAT THE WAR IN IRAQ WOULD BE THE FALL OF BOTH BUSH AND BLAIR, A DIFFERENT TAKE FROM THE EDITORIAL IN THIS WEEK'S POPULAR WEEKLY PARIS MATCH. (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAN - NUCLEAR ESCALATION

"SORCERER'S APPRENTICES"

FRANCOIS ERNENWEIN IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (05/13): "IRAN HAS CHOSEN TO TORPEDO THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE, GERMANY AND BRITAIN. THIS HARSH LINE ON THE PART OF IRAN OPENS THE DOOR TO A WORRISOME TUG-OF-WAR, EVEN IF IT IS PART OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH THE EUROPEAN APPROACH DIFFERED FROM THAT OF THE U.S., BOTH SHARED THE SAME OBJECTIVES. AND WERE COMPLEMENTARY. SINCE YESTERDAY, TEHERAN'S ATTITUDE MEANS THAT IT IS LEADING UP TO A CONFRONTATION. THE NEW TONE ADOPTED BY IRAN DOES NOT HERALD ANYTHING GOOD, JUST WHEN EVERYONE THOUGHT IT HAD LEARNED ITS LESSON FROM THE IRAQI CRISIS. THIS NEW TURN OF EVENTS SHOULD MAKE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEANS AND THE AMERICANS EVEN MORE PRESSING. FOR THE WEST, IT IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE TO HAVE A COUNTRY LIKE IRAN POSSESS NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES IN SUCH A TROUBLED REGION."

"IRAN BRANDISHES ATOMIC THREAT"

ISABELLE LASSERRE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/13): "THE IRANIAN CRISIS IS A NEW REVERSAL FOR EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY. PRESIDENT BUSH, AFTER HAVING DRAGGED HIS FEET. FINALLY RALLIED WITH THE EUROPEAN TROIKA. BUT IN REALITY, THE U.S. ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT IRAN WAS PLAYING A DOUBLE GAME WITH THE INTENTION OF BUILDING A NUCLEAR BOMB. IF THIS IS THE CASE, DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE WILL NOT SUFFICE. IT IS CLEAR THAT IF THE U.S. HAD BEEN ALONE ON THIS, IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE PUT THE ISSUE IN THE HANDS OF THE UNSC. IF IRAN TURNS ITS THREAT INTO REALITY, THE EUROPEANS WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO ALONG WITH THE AMERICANS. BUT WHAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IS WHETHER THE IRANIAN THREAT IS ON THE LEVEL OR WHETHER THEY ARE BLUFFING."

BOLTON NOMINATION

"THE TRIBULATIONS OF BUSH'S CANDIDATE"

PHILIPPE GELIE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/13): "IF JOHN BOLTON DOES GET TO THE UN, HE WILL HAVE BEEN PRECEDED BY HIS REPUTATION. AND FOR PRESIDENT BUSH THIS IS A SLIGHT, THE FIRST OF HIS SECOND TERM. WHILE BOLTON WAS FEELING THE WEIGHT OF THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM, HIS CAUSE IS NOT TOTALLY LOST. BUT HIS PRESTIGE AND HIS CREDIT COME OUT OF THE ARENA DURABLY TARNISHED. SOME UN DIPLOMATS ARE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT A `DISASTER.'"

OIL FOR FOOD REPORT

"VIRTUE AND CORRUPTION"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/13): "ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE NAIVE TO THINK THAT THE SENATORS WHO HAVE FINGERED CHARLES PASQUA WANTED TO SAFEGUARD THE VIRTUOUS NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THEIR TRUE TARGETS GO WELL BEYOND THIS FORMER MINISTER OF PRESIDENT CHIRAC, THEY ARE THE UN AND FRANCE - THE SENATORS MAY EVEN HAVE MISTAKENLY BELIEVED THAT PASQUA WAS AN ANAGRAM FOR CHIRAC. IN THE SENATORS' EYES, BOTH THE UN AND FRANCE ARE GUILTY OF HAVING COUNTERED AMERICA'S INTERESTS IN IRAQ. ONE NEED ONLY LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUSH CLAN AND AMERICA'S OIL BARONS TO SMILE AT WASHINGTON'S INDIGNATION TOWARDS PASQUA'S CORRUPTION. EVEN IF WE CANNOT BE NAIVE TO THE POINT OF BELIEVING HE IS COMPLETELY VIRTUOUS."

IRAQ - BUSH AND BLAIR

"BUSH-BLAIR: SAME SUCCESS"

IVAN RIOUFOL IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/13): "TO THE FALSE PROPHETS WHO PREDICTED THAT THE WAR IN IRAQ WOULD LEAD TO THE FALL OF BOTH BUSH AND BLAIR: NOT ONLY DID BUSH GET EASILY RE-ELECTED IN 2004, BLAIR WAS ALSO RE-ELECTED TO A THIRD TERM. AN ADDED SOURCE OF UNHAPPINESS FOR THE ANTI-BUSH CLAN: THE TRIUMPH HE RECEIVED IN GEORGIA, WHICH IS THE FIRST CIS NATION TO HAVE PEACEFULLY ACHIEVED ITS REVOLUTION WITH THE HELP OF THE U.S."

"BLAIR RE-ELECTION, IN SPITE OF IRAQ"

ALAIN GENESTAR IN WEEKLY PARIS MATCH (05/13): "BLAIR SERIOUSLY HURT HIS IMAGE BY ASSOCIATING WITH BUSH THE WARMONGER. BUT THE FACT THAT HE WAS ABLE TO OVERCOME THIS MAJOR ERROR ON HIS PART PROVES THAT HIS ECONOMIC POLICY IS UNIMPEACHABLE. HIS MILITARY COMMITMENT ALONGSIDE THE U.S. SHOULD HAVE COST HIM HIS POSITION. IF HE WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIS JOB, ALBEIT WITH THE LOSS OF A FEW FEATHERS, AND IF HIS WAR IN IRAQ DID NOT KILL HIM POLITICALLY, IT IS BECAUSE HE WAS ABLE TO WIN THAT OTHER WAR WHICH HAS CAUSED SO MANY CASUALTIES IN BRITAIN AND ELSEWHERE: THE WAR AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT." WOLFF